

Attn: Commerce Committee

Please vote NO on HB 5263. Rabbits are forced to live in inhumane and filthy conditions without any regular inspections. The rabbits that are bred for meat are frequently affected by parasites and illnesses due to their crowded and dirty living conditions.

I had a companion rabbit for almost 11 years. He would come to me when called by name, would throw his toys and fetch them himself, and would jump up on the couch with my husband and I and sit and give us kisses. They can be trained to use a litter box like a cat; my rabbit would go up the stairs to his litter box when the need arose. Rabbits are the third most popular pet in the U.S. Rabbits are very sensitive and intelligent animals who form bonds with people and other rabbits....

There are no provisions for the meat rabbit to be stunned before slaughter, and no inspectors are required to be present. These helpless animals will be vulnerable to being butchered while alive. If you search on the internet you will find many cases of animal abuse and torture in slaughterhouses, and I worry about the rabbits. The working conditions for the people in this industry are very poor, too.

Rabbit urine has a high concentration of ammonia which will result in emissions higher than pork or chicken. There is widespread concern of the environmental impact of CAFOs, and raising rabbits for meat will result in more impact.

There are many rabbits suffering in these operations...hidden from view. Many are slaughtered between eight to twelve weeks of age, and 15 to 30 percent die before this age because of poor living conditions and lack of proper care. The flooring in the cages (wire mesh) causes inflammation of their feet and infection.

The animal protection charity "Last Chance for Animals" performed an undercover operation in the Pel Freez slaughterhouse in Arkansas; the largest in the U.S. The workers attempted to stun them with a blunt knife, but many remained conscious as their legs were broken and they would scream...they were then shackled while they were decapitated with a dull knife. Rabbits will scream when in severe pain; this can be heard when a wild rabbit is attacked by a hawk....they feel pain and terror.

This industry is inhumane and a heavy burden on the environment. We butcher enough other animals for human consumption already, and don't need to kill more. Please do the right thing and vote NO on HB5263.

I thank you for taking the time to read my message.

Sincerely,
Roberta Kessler
2340 Ardaugh Ave.
Crest Hill, IL 60403

